

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A bearing surface comprising:
a leading edge;
a trailing edge;
a bearing surface level;
a first recessed level recessed below the bearing surface level;
a second recessed level recessed below the first recessed level; and
a center split feature disposed proximate a centroid of the bearing surface, the center split feature comprising:
a first center split level that is at the same level as the bearing surface level;
a second center split level disposed forward of the first center split level that is at the same level as the first recessed level; and
a third center split level disposed forward of the second center split level and recessed from the second center split level;
wherein the first, second and third center split levels form a step like pattern, and are disposed such that fluid flowing over the bearing surface flows over the third, second and first center split levels.

2. (Currently Amended) The bearing surface of claim 1 further comprising:
a cavity dam disposed proximate to the leading edge, the cavity dam having a disemedia facing surface that is | raised above the first recessed level; and
a subambient pressurization cavity disposed between the cavity dam and the center split feature.

3. (Original) The bearing surface of claim 2 further comprising:
 - a first side rail disposed along a first side of the slider body;
 - a second side rail disposed along a second side of the slider body.
4. (Original) The bearing surface of claim 3 wherein the first and second rails are continuous with the center split feature.
5. (Original) The bearing surface of claim 2 wherein the first center split level is connected to the cavity dam and the first center split level surrounds the subambient pressurization cavity.
6. (Original) The bearing surface of claim 2 wherein a portion of the subambient pressurization cavity includes the third center split level.
7. (Original) The bearing surface of claim 1 wherein the first recessed level is recessed between about .15 microns and about .3 microns.
8. (Original) The air bearing surface of claim 1 wherein the second recessed level is recessed between about 2 microns and about 5 microns.
9. (Original) The bearing surface of claim 2 wherein the center split feature further includes:
 - a pair of arms extending from the center split feature towards the cavity dam, each arm coupled to a side edge of the center split feature;wherein the pair of arms define side edges of the subambient pressurization cavity.

10. (Original) The bearing surface of claim 9 wherein the pair of arms connect the center split feature with the cavity dam.

11. (Original) The bearing surface of claim 10 wherein a top surface of the pair of arms is at the first recessed level.

12. (Original) The bearing surface of claim 10 wherein a top surface of the pair of arms is at the bearing surface level.

13. (Original) The bearing surface of claim 9 further comprising:

a plurality of arms extending from the first center split level towards the cavity dam, the plurality of arms spaced apart from each other and arranged about the centroid; and

wherein the plurality of arms divide the second center split level into a plurality of discrete areas.

14. (Original) The bearing surface of claim 13 wherein the plurality of arms divide the third center split level into a plurality of discrete areas.

15. (Currently Amended) A slider supporting a transducer comprising:

a slider body having a mediadise opposing face with a leading edge and a trailing edge relative to a direction of rotation of a media surface~~the data storage disc~~;

a bearing surface disposed on the mediadise opposing face, comprising:

a center split feature disposed proximate a centroid of the slider body, the center split feature comprising:

a first center split level;

a second center split level recessed from the first center split level; and

a third center split level recessed from the second center split level;

wherein the first, second and third center split levels form a step like pattern, and are disposed such that fluid flowing over the center split feature flows over the third, second and first center split levels.

16. (Original) The slider of claim 15 wherein the slider body further comprises:

a cavity dam proximate to the leading edge;

a first side rail disposed along a first side of the slider body;

a second side rail disposed along a second side of the slider body; and

a subambient pressurization cavity disposed between the cavity dam and the center split feature.

17. (Original) The slider of claim 16 wherein the slider body further comprises:

a second sub ambient pressurization cavity, the second subambient pressurization cavity following, in the direction of fluid flow, the center split feature.

18. (Original) The slider of claim 17 wherein the second sub ambient pressurization cavity is divided into two separate cavities by a center rail feature.

19. (Original) A bearing surface comprising:
a center split feature disposed proximate a centroid of the bearing surface, the center split feature comprising at least three center split levels,
wherein the at least three center split levels form a step like pattern, and are disposed such that fluid flowing over the bearing surface flows over each of the at least three center split levels.
20. (New) The bearing surface of claim 19 further comprising:
a cavity dam disposed forward of the center split feature relative to the fluid flow.